

want to just correct the minority whip, the Democratic whip. He is a man with whom I have a great deal of agreement. But I think he was wrong when he said the rigid ideology of the people in power today leads them to the view, my way or the highway.

I wish that were the case. Mr. Speaker, as you well know from your own committee position, the right wing ideology are on the point of saying, my way instead of the highway. Because so rigid are they in their right-wing ideology that we cannot even get a highway bill passed this year, as we certainly should, in the interest of the transportation needs of this country and the economy.

But I want to talk beyond that about the work habits of the President. It is clear that in addition to an excessively rigid ideology we have an administration which is not very competent in a lot of things. I do not think we have seen a more incompetently executed national security policy of a major sort than Iraq in our history.

And I wonder why we get such poor execution, even given that I disagree with some of the things they are trying to execute. Now it does become clear one of the problems may be the President's work habits.

On December 16 in an interview on ABC News with Diane Sawyer, the President boasted about how he does not need to read the newspapers or, presumably, watch television. He gets his information, he says, from members of his administration. When Diane Sawyer said, "Is it just hard to read constant criticism?" He interjected, "Why even put up with it when you get the facts elsewhere? I am a lucky man," the President said. "I have got, it is not just Condi and Andy, it is all kinds of people in my administration who are charged with different responsibilities. And they come in and say this is what is happening, this is not what is happening."

Well, Mr. President, you are being ill served by this refusal to get independent sources of information. You got a lot of people who confuse what is happening with what is not happening and sometimes they do not tell you anything.

Most recently we have the Secretary of Defense who forgot to tell you that we had a major debilitating problem coming up with regard to the mistreatment of prisoners. And he did not tell you that.

Last year, in what I think you consider to be, Mr. President, the single most important domestic accomplishment in the administration, did someone forget to tell you that the bill you were telling us was going to cost \$400 billion over 10 years was, in fact, going to cost \$540 billion and that all of the additional billion would go to the providers and none of it to the recipients? Did someone forget to tell the President or did the President forget to tell us?

Then, of course, we have the comment by CIA Director George Tenet

who told the President apparently that it was a slam-dunk that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Well, once again, we have a case on a very important issue of the President and, to quote his words, all kinds of people in my administration were charged with different responsibilities and they would come in and say this is what is happening and this is not what is happening.

There is a serious problem, Mr. President. The time has come for the President of the United States to admit an error in this case, I know he does not like to do that, to admit that relying on Secretary Rumsfeld or CIA Director Tenet or Secretary Thompson or a whole range of other people to give him the information to brag about how he eschews independent, factual sources is a great mistake and may explain some of the serious mistakes this administration has made.

Old sayings sometimes can be overdone. Sometimes they have some truth. There is a saying that ignorance is bliss. Well, Mr. Speaker, there may be context in which ignorance is bliss, but the Presidency of the United States is not one of them.

The time has come for the President to acknowledge the fact that his method of getting information only from people within his own administration, who may have their own motives for misrepresenting or not giving him information that might be embarrassing to them, that that has broken down, and the time has come for the President to dip into the budget that he gets and buy a subscription to some newspapers and watch the TV news.

Mr. Speaker, I will insert into the RECORD at this point the excerpt from the interview with Diane Sawyer.

DIANE SAWYER. First of all, I just want to ask about reading. Mr. President, you know that there was a great deal of reporting about the fact that you said, first of all, that you let Condoleezza Rice and Andrew Card give you a flavor of what's in the news.

PRESIDENT BUSH. Yes.

DIANE SAWYER. That you don't read the stories yourself.

PRESIDENT BUSH. Yes. I get my news from people who don't editorialize. They give me the actual news, and it makes it easier to digest, on a daily basis, the facts.

DIANE SAWYER. Is it just harder to read constant criticism or to read—

PRESIDENT BUSH. Why even put up with it when you can get the facts elsewhere? I'm a lucky man. I've got, it's not just Condi and Andy, it's all kinds of people in my administration who are charged with different responsibilities, and they come in and say this is what's happening, this isn't what's happening.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members should bear in mind that remarks in debate should be addressed to the Chair and not to others as in the second person.

THE HOUSE SHOULD NOT PASS H.R. 3722, UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSIST- ANCE AMENDMENTS OF 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, we heard earlier from the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) his sentiments regarding H.R. 3722. This item is on suspension and will be coming up before us. It is known as the Undocumented Alien Emergency Medical Assistance Amendments. That title is somewhat misleading because, in fact, what it requires is that our local hospitals turn into what I see as law enforcement agencies and INS agents, INS Immigration Service agents that would soon be asking people who may look or appear as though they are undocumented to provide some proof or verification that they are, in fact, full citizens of the United States.

We do not do that in our schools. Why do we have to do that in our hospitals, especially when people are already fearful of coming forward to, say, a local hospital and having to fill out forms and then being told that, well, you do not qualify because you are not a U.S. citizen or you are undocumented therefore we are going to call the INS or Homeland Security and deport you?

What kind of fear does that place in a community?

Well, I can tell you in a community like mine in Los Angeles, California, where the make-up of my district is largely Hispanic or Latino, that is not to say that they are all undocumented and that is not to say that they do not work and pay taxes; in fact, on the average I would say that the local immigrants in our communities pay about \$1,300 in taxes. They do not get that money back in some cases because they may not be documented. We know that. That has been happening here in the U.S.

But they pay into our tax base system whether it is to go down and buy a gallon of gas at \$2.40 or \$2.50 a gallon now in Los Angeles, if they go down and buy goods at the market or Home Depot, they are paying sales tax. All that then goes into our piggy bank, so to speak, for the government. That money then is set aside for public health care institutions and private health care institutions.

I would like to tell you that in my district alone I received letters from some of our private-for-profit hospitals that were adamantly opposed to this piece of legislation because they see it again as something that is going to provide another layer of bureaucracy. It will make them become INS agents. They will have to fingerprint, photograph, take digital photos and keep files for 5 years on anyone that they believe may be undocumented.

And I have to tell you that the kind of feeling that I get when I hear about